

Why Social Media?

Social media is a powerful and affordable tool for business. By developing your social media presence for your practice, you can:

BUILD AWARENESS

Get your families to know you beyond check-ups, and increase opportunities to build and maintain a positive perception of your practice.

HELP GAIN NEW PATIENTS

Drive patients to your practice's social media pages and websites to find out more information about what you have to offer.

STRENGTHEN CUSTOMER SERVICE

Engage with current and potential patients by answering questions about appointments or services, or help existing patients with any problems.

INCREASES ENGAGEMENT

Interact with patient families/your followers by giving them reasons to mention your practice (for example, sharing tips, new studies) and refer others to your office.

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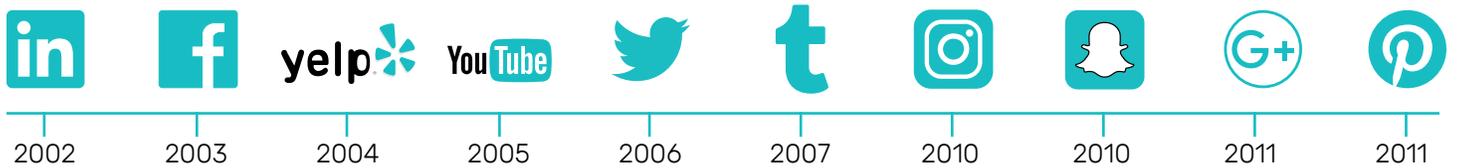
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Social Media Landscape

EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media today is a top driver for delivering news content. In fact, news IS social media. More than half (51 percent) of consumers say they use social media as a source of news each week. With thousands of social media platforms, all serving the same, but slightly different purpose, businesses need to stay up-to-date on the latest trends and identify ways to use each platform to help them grow and reach new customers. The social channels recommended within this toolkit are starting places for you to begin engaging with local families and to attract new audiences.



FUTURE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

STRONGER ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN COMPANIES AND CONSUMERS

The connection between brands and consumers has never been closer than what we see today. Consumers will mention a brand or business by name while sharing personal accomplishments on social media. In addition to sharing their accomplishments, consumers look forward to receiving feedback and acknowledgment from brands/businesses.

CONSUMERS TURNING TO SOCIAL MEDIA

Consumers are turning to social media when they feel they've been wronged and use their networks as a chance to express opinions and be heard.

FACEBOOK CHANGES SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACT BRANDS AND COMPANIES

Recent changes to the way Facebook prioritizes posts includes highlighting friends and families over brands and companies. This means word of mouth recommendations are now more valuable than ever.

LIVE VIDEO WILL BECOME MORE IMPORTANT

Live video or "news as it happens" will lead to new immersive and personal experiences, allowing brands to communicate in real time with consumers. Many social platforms, including Facebook, have already included live video/streaming capabilities on their platforms.

Overview of Recommended Social Media Networks

Given the many options for social media networks, it can be difficult to understand which one is best for your practice, given your limited time and resources. The information below was selected based on: target audience (your patients), popularity of the network (number of users) and overall practicality of the network to support business objectives.



KEY STATS

- 2 Billion Monthly Unique Users
- 75 percent of users spend 20 minutes or more on Facebook per day
- 1 of 4 minutes on mobile is spent on Facebook and Instagram in the U.S.

WHY IT MATTERS

The largest of the social networks, Facebook is primarily made up of female users, with 84 percent of moms on the platform. Additionally, 50 million businesses use the channel to reach their customers.

The largest audience of all the social networks, Facebook helps businesses reach and connect with customers. More than 50 million businesses are now using Facebook pages to connect and manage customer interactions.

Use the platform to share:

- Highly visual graphics and/or pictures and engaging video content
- Patient/customer testimonials
- Promos/deals
- Industry updates and news from third-party sources

RUNNING A FACEBOOK PAGE

CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recent updates have made it easier for businesses to address public comments and private messages
- You can now tell patients how quickly you'll respond to messages (i.e., within minutes, hours or days)
- You can also indicate when you are unavailable to respond to a message by posting an "away" status, as well as through instant replies

BE SURE TO COMPLETELY FILL OUT YOUR PROFILE

- Use a visually compelling profile picture and a cover photo
- Update the About section to include a phone number and website of business
- Include links to Facebook on your website if applicable
- Add Community Guidelines that are in the "Mission" section
 - In the Appendix of this document you will find an example



KEY STATS

- 145 million average Yelp monthly unique visitors
- 2.8 million local business claimed on Yelp
- 142 million reviews on Yelp
- 90 percent of consumers read online reviews before visiting a business

WHY IT MATTERS

With 90 percent of consumers reading online reviews before visiting a business, Yelp is an important part of a business' social strategy. The review site also helps build a practices' credibility and trust.

Review sites, like Yelp, allow customers to leave authentic and honest reviews and personal experiences that can affect consumer's decision on whether or not to visit your business. Review sites also have search engine optimization (SEO) capabilities that allow your business to become more discoverable online by increasing the quantity and quality of traffic to your website.

- Using Yelp will allow customers and patients to leave reviews and rate your business as well as their experience
- Businesses also have the opportunity to respond to positive and negative reviews
- According to Forbes, businesses that claim their free Yelp business page, generate, on average \$8,000 in incremental revenue each year

HOW TO USE YELP

CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Officially claim your business listing
- Add basic information to your page including a brief history of the business, areas of specialty and hours of operation
- Business pages with up to five Yelp reviews and 10 photos get 200 percent more views than those with no photos
- Make sure to respond to every review, whether thanking a happy patient or offering to rectify a poor experience



KEY STATS

- 328 Million monthly active users
- 45 percent of users most likely to post about a business and product
- 80 percent of customer service requests come via Twitter

WHY IT MATTERS

Primarily used as an avenue for customer service, news/event updates and real-time content. Practices should use this channel to communicate directly to users.

Primarily used as an avenue for customer service, news/event updates and real-time content, businesses use this channel to communicate directly with users.

- Share office updates and news with patients
- Reach out to people directly, rather than only as a platform to broadcast your message to everyone
- Respond directly to patient inquiries

RUNNING A TWITTER ACCOUNT

CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Use hashtags (#) ahead of common phrases (i.e. #babyteeth) to identify messages on a certain topic. You can search hashtag phrases to discover conversations you want to be apart of
- Identify and join conversations that align with your practices' expertise
- Retweet positive mentions from patients
- Use Twitter's Direct Message feature to take the conversation into a private space
- Share news articles and blog post about trends in the industry and information your patient would find relevant
- Make sure your Twitter bio includes a link to your website

Developing Your Social Channel Personality

VOICE, TONE, LANGUAGE

Finding a voice and tone for your social media channels is crucial to the success of your social media presence. Here are a few tips to help you find the right voice, tone and language for your practice.

- Establish a voice that is authentic to your practice
- Be human
- Engage in two-way dialogue with patients
- Stay away from using profanity and sharing political or personal updates
- Keep it professional
- Remember nothing is off the record

CREATIVE BEST PRACTICES

It is important to follow and keep in mind the following creative best practices to make sure your audience is engaging with your content.

- Make video a top priority
- Use photos and graphics with emotional pull
- Keep context in mind and keep it real
- Keep captions short (no longer than 90 characters)
- Link to additional information including articles and use link shortening services such as bit.ly
- Develop and foster a community by engaging with audience
- Link to social channels on company website and vice versa

Note, patients, potential patients and members of the community may come across your personal Facebook/Twitter pages. Be cognizant of content/messages/photos/videos placed on these pages and ensure they meet the best practices outlined above.

Managing Your Social Media Community

Community management is about relationships and how your practice takes opportunities to interact with your community online. Your community consists of current patients, target audiences and all the people who interact with your brand directly and indirectly online. It is a key part of customer service and a way to help you be active in discussions that relate to your practice.

Below are some additional considerations when responding to a post/comment.

TRANSPARENCY

- Disclose your connection to the practice

JUST THE FACTS

- Stick to the facts and cite your sources by including links to reference material

TIMELINESS

- Respond in a timely manner but take time to formulate a careful response and have it double-checked as needed

TONE

- Respond in a tone that reflects the mission and values of your practice

RESPECT

- Always respond with gratitude, and respect whether or not the individual shows the same tone

Considerations for Content Development

In developing content for social channels, it will be more interesting to your followers if you vary the content. Below are themes for types of content that you can develop or share.

THIRD-PARTY ARTICLES

- Share relevant news or studies, and provide your own POV

CUSTOMER TESTIMONIALS & PATIENT STORIES*

- Share success stories of patients
- Positive reviews and feedback from customers

STAFF PROFILES

- Feature your all-star staff, share fun facts that showcase their personalities

DEALS AND DISCOUNTS

- Entice patients to visit your practice by sharing deals and discounts in social posts
- Offer a discount to new patients

TIPS AND TRICKS

- Use your social channels to remind parents and caregivers about ways to keep little teeth healthy!
- Always remember you can re-share content for AAPD's social channel or look to it for inspiration!

In terms of cadence, how frequently to post, the following is recommended. However, you should always be responding to patient complaints and compliments. You should also consider paid support in order for your content to reach a broader audience.

- Facebook: 1-4 times per month
- Twitter: 3-5 times per month

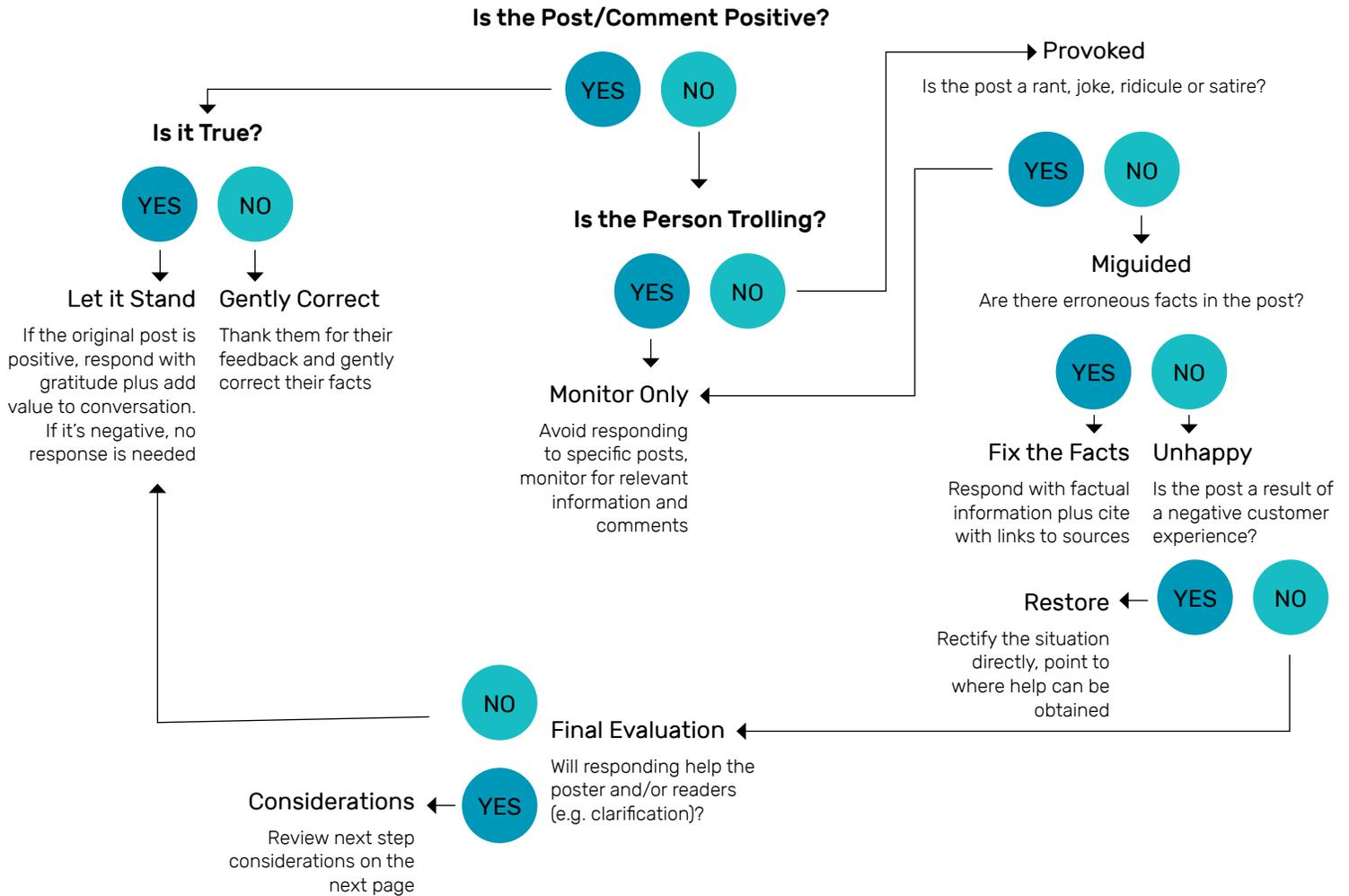


**Please note: it is important to get approval and a signed release form in order to feature any patient on your social media channels.*

Engaging with Your Community: Response Matrix

Patients expect instant gratification on social media. A social media response matrix is a flow chart that directs a practice on how to respond to comments on social media based on the nature of their content. It helps keep you consistent, organized and accountable about how to act in various situations that take place online.

Below is a response plan to help you communicate with them quickly and authentically.



Community Management: Responding to Negative Posts

EVERYDAY SCENARIOS

Engaging with patient families on social media offers many benefits, including staying connected in-between appointments. However, it is important to be prepared to respond to complaints. Best practices dictate that posts should not be removed unless they violate Community Guidelines. Below are example scenarios and recommended responses for handling complaints on social media.

Example 1

Scenario: A mother of one of your patients writes a complaint on your Facebook Business Page about your office not taking her new insurance.

Sample post: I am outraged! My children have been patients of your office for eight years and when I called to set up their next routine cleaning appointment they denied my new insurance plan! Clearly this office does not care about their patients!

Steps to take via the response flowchart: Is it positive? > no > is the person trolling? > no > provoked? > no > misguided? > no > unhappy? > yes > restore

Example 2

Scenario: The parent of a patient writes a post on your Facebook Business Page expressing frustration in booking an appointment for their child.

Sample post: Dr. Smith is a great pediatric dentist for my kids. However, it's frustrating that I need to book an appointment eight months in advance for my child who needs a routine check up. How are there no available appointments from now until then?

Steps to take via the response flowchart: Is it positive? > no > is the person trolling? > no > misguided? > no > unhappy? > yes > restore

Suggested response:



Suggested response:



Example 3

Scenario: A parent of a patient writes a post on your Facebook Business Page expressing frustration about being overcharged for her child’s service.

Sample post: I have been overcharged for my child’s visit and this isn’t the first time! Not happy!

Steps to take via the response flowchart: Is it positive? > no > is the person trolling? > no > mis-guided? > perhaps > fix the facts > restore

Suggested response:



NEWS-DRIVEN SCENARIO

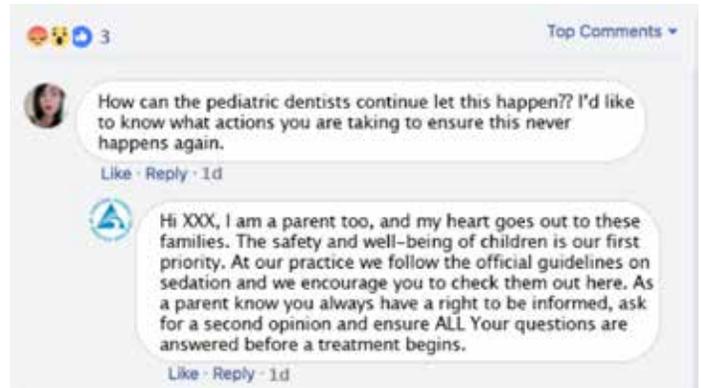
Occasionally, someone may post on a topic that is not directly related to an experience they had at your practice, but more broadly related to dentists or pediatric dentistry. Often, these posts are prompted by a news story, especially if the news is shared through social media channels.

Scenario: A member of the community writes a post on your Facebook Business Page expressing uproar about a recent sedation death case.

Sample post: How can the pediatric dentists continue let this happen?? I'd like to know what actions you are taking to ensure this never happens again.

Steps to take via the response flowchart: Is it positive? > no > is the person trolling? > no > mis-guided? > perhaps > fix the facts > restore

Suggested response:



Preparing for Issues on Social Media

Your practice must be prepared for occasional missteps that may happen on social media. Often, the issue is addressed directly in a timely manner, with transparency and authenticity, the issue does not escalate. However, issues may quickly escalate on social media channels if not handled properly, and can even jump to generating negative “traditional” news coverage (i.e., local /national newspapers or television). Below are examples of issues handled by two high-profile organizations, one that was handled appropriately and one that caused additional problems for the organization.

The Red Cross’ Rogue Tweet

The issue: One of the Red Cross’ social media employees accidentally sent a tweet—which was meant for her private account—and didn’t realize it. It stayed up for about an hour before the company’s social media director was alerted and took it down.

How the Red Cross responded: Social media director Wendy Harman followed up with a humorous tweet from the official Twitter account and acknowledged the mistake. It got support from Dogfish Head too, who embraced the hashtag #gettngslizzerd and encouraged its followers to donate to the Red Cross.

The result: The tweet generated a bit of buzz among bloggers and the Twitter verse, but so did the fun response by the company. Nobody was outraged, and the Red Cross had to deal with nothing more than a little embarrassment.



United Airlines Apology

The issue: A United flight was overbooked and a passenger was forcibly removed from the plane. Passengers captured a cell phone video that went viral.

How United responded: The CEO issued an apology, but phrased it as “having to re-accommodate” the customer. The statement provoked a new wave of crisis with their audience accusing him of being disrespectful and misidentifying the problem.

The result: The CEO’s response should have been more heartfelt, but instead the tweet showed lack of understanding and accountability. Online apologies need to be crafted carefully, think of the emotions that need to be addressed and choose your words carefully.



Protocol for Issues Management

In thinking about how you handle issues that may arise on your practice's social channels, it is important to remember that there is no one-size-fits-all approach. You will need to assess the level of potential risk on a case-by-case basis. In most instances, the best course of action is to closely monitor any situation that arises and consider where it may be appropriate for your practice to engage without overreacting or elevating issues further.

CLOSELY MONITOR SOCIAL MEDIA

- Keep a close eye on the social media conversations around the industry and practice.

REAL-TIME EVALUATION OF THE SOCIAL MEDIA CONVERSATIONS

- Is the info factual? How many people are driving a negative conversation? How fast is the conversation growing? Is it coming from an activist group?

RESPONSE FOR POTENTIAL ISSUES

- Evaluate the situation to determine the appropriate response. Most times, crisis situations do not require a response or at least an immediate response. Consider the ASSESS and REASSESS steps before engaging in the situation.

ASSESS PUBLIC RESPONSES (MEDIA AND/OR SOCIAL)

- Assess on a case-by-case basis depending on how viral, viewership, audience, severity and focus of the conversation.

REASSESS AS THE SITUATION UNFOLDS

- Watch closely and continue to take appropriate actions.



The Importance of Paid Media

As social media continues to evolve, businesses have seen a decrease in the number of people who engage with their content organically (Facebook reports less than one percent of your audience sees your content). Facebook also recently announced changes to their algorithm, which now favor posts from friends and family instead of brands or businesses. Given the ever changing space, businesses should make paid amplification of posts a key part of their strategy.

Practices can use paid ads to:

- Expand current audience and reach new patients
- Optimize content for different practice goals
- Gather information on what type of content is performing best and resonating with your audience

HOW DOES PAID SUPPORT WORK?

Paid support means paying to get more eyeballs on your posts, pictures, and videos, in turn broadening your reach. Even a small investment on any of these channels is a good place to start. This way, you can test and elevate your posts based on what is performing the strongest (for example, a link to a relevant news article vs a promo deal).

Facebook: Over 5 million businesses of all sizes are using Facebook ads. This channel is effective and affordable and allows you to reach new patients, while also allowing practices to remain competitive in the busy online marketplace. Additionally, because Facebook owns Instagram, your practice has the option to run ads on that platform as well and determine where you are seeing stronger performance.

Yelp: Yelp ads feature your practice when patients search for a business like yours. Eighty-two percent of Yelp users visit intending to buy a product or service and 89 percent of those who do so within a week. Ads appear across desktop, mobile website and mobile app.

Twitter: With Twitter ads, you can get more likes, amplify your message and get more people talking about your practice.

GETTING STARTED

Facebook/Instagram, Yelp and Twitter are self-service platforms for paid advertising. Below are links to the platform resources to help get you started.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/business/>

Yelp: <https://biz.yelp.com/advertise>

Twitter: <https://business.twitter.com/>

Measuring Social Media

Building and managing your social media communities takes time and resources so it is important to understand how they are positively impacting your practice. Some questions to help you track and measure the impact of your social media efforts:

- Are you reaching more people on a weekly/monthly basis?
- Are you receiving more positive reviews from patients?
- Are you increasing the number of patients?
- Are you creating relationships with patients?
- Are your social posts getting engagements from people who follow your channels (for example, likes, shares, retweets and comments)?

TOOLS

There are a variety of social media “tools” that can help you manage your social media presence and measure your overall success. Below is a list of those that are most useful:

- [Yext](#): Helps companies holistically manage public facts about their business everywhere that customers search.
- [Bit.ly](#): This link shorten service allows brands to tracks clicks.
- [Hootsuite](#): Utilize Hootsuite for free to manage multiple social accounts, schedule posts and pull basic analytics.
- Platform Analytics Tools including Facebook Insights, Twitter Analytics, Instagram Business Profile.
- Other tools include [Sprout Social](#) (monitoring and response) and [MozAnalytics](#) (measurement).



Appendix

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ALGORITHM

An algorithm is a set of formulas developed for a computer to perform a certain function. This is important in the social sphere as the algorithms sites like Facebook and Google use are critical for developing content promotion strategies.

AWARENESS

Comprising of reach and attention, brand awareness helps ensure ads are being served to people who are more likely to spend time with them and recall them later.

BITLY

Bitly is a free URL shortening service that provides statistics for the links users share online. Bitly is popularly used to condense long URLs to make them easier to share on social networks such as Twitter.

BIO

A bio on social media refers to a short bit of explainer text that explains who the user is.

ENGAGEMENT

The main purpose of social media is for you to use it as an opportunity to actively engage with customers, potential customers, friends and family. In the simplest terms, engagement is the interaction between people and brands on social networks. For example, on Facebook, engagement includes likes, comments and shares.

ENGAGEMENT RATE

Engagement rate is a popular social media metric used to describe the amount of interaction—likes, shares, comments—a piece of content receives.

FAVORITE

Represented by the small star icon on Twitter, favoriting a tweet signals to the creator that you liked their content or post.

HASHTAG

A hashtag is a tag used on a variety of social networks as a way to annotate a message. A hashtag is a word or phrase preceded by a “#” (i.e. #Dentist). Social networks use hashtags to categorize information and make it easily searchable for users.

IMPRESSION

An impression refers to a way in which marketers and advertisers keep track of every time ad is seen.

INSTAGRAM STORIES

Photos and videos shared on your Instagram feed that disappear after 24 hours. Launched in August 2016.

LIKE

A Like is an action that can be made by a Facebook or Instagram user. Instead of writing a comment or sharing a post, a user can click the Like button as a quick way to show approval.

MENTION

A mention is a Twitter term used to describe an instance in which a user includes someone else’s @username in their tweet to attribute a piece of content or start a discussion.

MESSENGER BOTS/CHATBOTS

Chatbots are computer programs that mimic conversation with people using artificial intelligence. A way of building more personal relationships with customers, brands will increasingly use chatbots to complete simple transactions.

REACH

Reach signifies the number of people a brand could target using advertising. It also signifies how many people have had sight of a particular post.

REPLY

A reply is a Twitter action that allows a user to respond to a tweet through a separate tweet that begins with the other user’s @username. This differs from a mention, because tweets that start with an @username only appear in the timelines of users who follow both parties.

RETWEET

A retweet is when someone on Twitter sees your message and decides to re-share it with his or her followers. A retweet button allows them to quickly resend the message with attribution to the original sharer’s name.

TAG

Tagging is a social media functionality commonly used on Facebook and Instagram that allows users to create a link back to the profile of the person shown in the picture or targeted by the update.

TRENDING TOPIC

Trending topics refer to the most talked about topics and hashtags on a social media network. These commonly appear on networks like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram and serve as clickable links in which users can either click through to join the conversation or simply browse the related content.

TROLL

To antagonize (others) online by deliberately posting inflammatory, irrelevant, or offensive comments or other disruptive content.

USER-GENERATED CONTENT

User-generated content is content—blogs, videos, photos, quotes, etc.—that is created by consumers. Marketers typically tap into their audience in an online setting to collect this type of content to support a campaign or initiative.

TEMPLATE COMMUNITY GUIDELINES

Below is recommended community guidelines for businesses to share on their Facebook page. Please note, this is an example, and we have used the fictitious name "XYZ Pediatric Dentistry" as a place holder.

SAMPLE COMMUNITY GUIDELINES

Our Facebook page is a place for you to engage with each other and with XYZ Pediatric Dentistry. We want to hear from our Facebook community and we encourage you to leave comments, post photos, and videos, while keeping in mind these guidelines:

1. Please make sure you comply with Facebook's terms and policies. They can be found here: <https://www.facebook.com/policies>
2. Please do not: post spam or comments that defame, harass, threaten or are otherwise objectionable or that violate the privacy, intellectual property or other rights of others; post in attempt to target the XYZ Pediatric Dentistry followers to offer goods, services, or supporting a cause, of either a commercial or private nature use; include profanity in your posts; post content that you don't own or have rights to; delete any attributions, legal notices or proprietary designations or labels in any information posted, or falsify the origin or source of any content posted.
3. We may monitor posts, so we reserve the right to remove any posts that are not in compliance with these rules, and to block repeat offenders.
4. Please remember that we cannot guarantee the accuracy of information posted by others. We do not endorse third party posts nor do their posts represent our opinions.
5. By submitting your content to the XYZ Pediatric Dentistry Facebook page, you grant XYZ Pediatric Dentistry the right to use such content or a portion thereof in any way and in all media (now known or developed in the future) for any purpose without further approval by or payment to you, as well as the right to use the name, likeness, and image of any person or persons appearing in the content. You understand and/or agree that any content you submit to the XYZ Pediatric Dentistry Facebook Page (1) does not infringe any copyright, patent, trademark, trade secret or other intellectual, privacy, or property right of any third party; (2) is not confidential or proprietary, and (3) does not require any other consent or authorization from any other party.



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